

XI.—*Notes on the Ornithology of Cyprus.*

By F. R. S. BAXENDALE, M.B.O.U.

As Mr. J. A. Bucknill, who contributed notes on the local avifauna of Cyprus to this Journal from 1909 till January 1913, has been transferred, on promotion, from that island to Hong Kong, and since then to Singapore, I have been asked to supply further notes on the same subject*.

I propose to follow Mr. Bucknill's general lines in making my notes.

The autumn and winter of 1912 were normal, and the winter visitors were not particularly numerous, but in the following spring, the rains continued later than usual, and the consequence was that the reservoir at Koukليا and the freshwater lake, both in the Famagusta District, afforded suitable breeding-places for several varieties of water-birds, and many migrants stayed longer than usual owing to the abundant food-supply found in these sheets of water.

The same was the case again last spring, and we have been able to add several novelties to our list of visitors, as well as to obtain the eggs of others which hitherto had not been definitely proved to have nested in the island.

I think it highly probable that other birds whose nesting has not yet been recorded laid their eggs in the vicinity of the before-mentioned lakes; although I am pretty certain that some of the late-staying birds were non-breeding ones. The undeveloped breeding-organs and non-nuptial plumage of a number of specimens that I examined led me to this conclusion.

Unfortunately I did not have an opportunity of exploring the reed-beds and islets of the Koukليا reservoir after the 31st of May. On that date I saw Little Bitterns, Glossy Ibises, Ruffs and Reeves, besides the more common birds generally found there at that time of the year.

* For previous contributions on this subject see 'Ibis,' 1909, pp. 569-613; 1910, pp. 1-47, 385-435; 1911, pp. 632-656; 1913, pp. 2-14. A sketch-map of Cyprus will be found in 'Ibis,' 1913, pl. ii.

At the freshwater lake, which I have had many opportunities of visiting, I saw Curlew-Sandpipers up till the 6th of June, and during June and July I noted Common Sandpipers, Geoffroy's Greater Sand-Plover, Redshanks, Reeves, Gull-billed Terns, and Slender-billed Gulls, also Green and Wood Sandpipers. I obtained specimens of most of these birds so as to be sure of my identification.

I noted a single Pelican and a Spoonbill there during June, and in July two Spoonbills frequented the lake until it quite dried up in the beginning of August. Of course, the usual nesting-birds were to be found there up till that date.

I was able to visit the Klides Islands again during the spring. A lighthouse, with a revolving light, was erected there in 1913, but it does not seem to have interfered with the nesting-birds. My visit was on the 19th of April, and I found the Lesser Peregrine's eyrie where it has been for the last three years. There were four young birds in it beginning to show feather.

The Herring-Gulls were nesting as usual, and some of their nests were not more than a hundred yards from the lighthouse. The young Shags had all left their nests and were swimming round the islands with their parents.

Sailing back to the mainland I noticed a Shearwater, but I was not near enough to make a good identification. I saw a Great White Heron on three occasions flying along the shore within a few miles of the islands.

Apparently I was a little too early to meet the full swing of the migration along the Karpas promontory. There were, however, a good many Shrikes and Wheatears of several varieties. I also met with large flocks of Ortolans, which I had only hitherto seen in small parties.

In the accompanying notes I have used the nomenclature adopted in the 'Hand-list of British Birds' and Hartert's *Vögel pal. Fauna*.

Turdus musicus Linn. (*Turdus iliacus* auct.)

On the 3rd of January, 1913, I found a Redwing with a

bunch of Song-Thrushes that had been caught on bird-lime and were being hawked round for sale.

This, I believe, is the second recorded instance of a Red-wing being obtained in the island.

Monticola solitarius (Linn.).

On the 4th of May, 1913, I found a nest of the Blue Rock-Thrush containing four highly incubated eggs. The nest was in a hole in one of the rooms of the ruins of Kantara Castle, which is situated on the northern range of hills.

This year I got a clutch of four fresh eggs from the same ruin.

Luscinia svecica cyanecula (Wolf). (*Cyanecula wolffi*.)

I shot a male White-spotted Bluethroat at the fresh-water lake in March 1913. This is the first and only one that I have seen, and the species has not been recorded from Cyprus since 1901.

The red-spotted bird I have seen on a number of occasions and have obtained specimens.

Sylvia melanothorax Tristram.

The Palestine Warbler is quite a common bird throughout the Karpas or northern range of hills during the summer months, and it can be found all through the winter in the scrub near the coast.

I procured a nest with four fresh eggs in May 1913. It was placed on the ground under a bush, and was principally composed of loose strips of juniper-bark. Last spring I obtained another nest containing three eggs. The nest was said to be placed low down in a gorse-bush and was made of stiffer materials than the first one that I procured, though a good deal of juniper-bark was used in its construction; and a third nest, also containing three eggs, was brought to me in September which was said to have been taken at the end of August. The eggs were not incubated, but appeared to be stale. As I have seen young birds flying about with their parents as early as the 17th of May, it is probable that these birds nest twice in the year.

Regulus regulus interni Hartert.

In December 1912 I obtained two specimens of this Golden-crested Wren, and later on I obtained another. A fourth was shot in the early spring of 1914, and others were seen and heard.

These birds were all found in the pine-trees close to Famagusta town.

There is no previous record of this Golderest being procured in Cyprus. Dr. Hartert kindly identified the skins for me.

Anthus campestris (Linn.).

I saw several Tawny Pipits in the Messaoria plain in the spring of both 1913 and 1914, and I obtained specimens. As I saw the birds later in the year as well, I think it is quite probable that they nest here.

Mr. M. J. Nicoll identified a specimen for me.

Passer hispaniolensis (Temm.).

In 1913 I saw several pairs of Spanish Sparrows nesting in some pepper-trees in the yard of the police-station at Ayios Theodoros, but the nests were destroyed before I procured the eggs.

Last spring, however, I found them nesting again in the same trees, and took a clutch of their eggs. There were five nests, and, as the birds were by no means shy, it was easy to identify the males. The ordinary House-Sparrow in Cyprus nests in holes, and I have never seen their nests in trees.

Emberiza hortulana Linn.

On the 6th of July, while on the northern range of hills, a clutch of four Ortolans' eggs was brought to me. I was informed that the nest was found on the range some twenty-five days previously. The Rev. F. C. R. Jourdain identified the eggs.

This is the first recorded instance of Ortolans nesting in Cyprus.

Alcedo ispida Linn.

Some Kingfishers appear to be resident in the island. They were seen at Kouklia reservoir in June and July, and

on the 1st of August last one flew past a tennis-court in Famagusta and was noticed by several people.

Asio otus (Linn.).

The Long-eared Owl, of which I believe there is only one previous record in Cyprus, was seen on several occasions during the winter of 1912-1913. Two specimens were obtained.

Buteo ferox (S. G. Gmel.).

On the 28th of December, 1912, Mr. C. B. Horsbrugh obtained a female Long-legged Buzzard at Kalochorio in the Larnaca District. On the 19th of January of the following year I shot a fine female, and ten days later I shot a male. Both birds were within seven miles of Famagusta. The crop of the female that I shot contained three pieces of snake and three frogs. These are the only specimens obtained in the island that are recorded, though Lord Lilford had no doubt that he had observed one near Cyprus from his yacht in 1875.

Mr. W. L. Selater helped me to identify the skin of the female which I obtained.

Haliaëtus albicilla (Linn.).

A specimen of the Sea-Eagle has at last been obtained. It was purchased by Mr. C. B. Horsbrugh in Larnaca on the 29th of January, 1913, having been shot at the salt lake near that town.

Some of these Eagles are seen every year. I noticed a pair in adult plumage sitting on the shore of Kouklia reservoir on the 11th of June, 1912, and I have often seen single birds there and also at the freshwater lake.

Aquila maculata (Gm.).

While Snipe-shooting on Avgashida Marsh with Mr. B. J. Amirayan on the 26th of December, 1912, we saw a Lesser Spotted Eagle. Mr. Amirayan was fortunate in being able to stalk the bird and shoot it. It was a male in good plumage. Mr. W. L. Selater was kind enough to help me to identify the skin.

This bird has not been previously recorded from Cyprus.

Falco cherrug J. E. Gray.

I shot a male Saker while Snipe-shooting on Avgashida Marsh on the 6th of December, 1913. This is the second specimen that I have obtained.

Falco peregrinus Tunstall.

I obtained a fine Peregrine Falcon in adult plumage on the 10th of May near Famagusta. It has never been proved that this Falcon nests on the island, but I should say that this is perhaps evidence in favour of its breeding locally.

Falco biarmicus feldeggi Schlegel.

On the 1st of February last I shot from my carriage a fine female Lanner about two-and-a-half miles from Famagusta. It is the first record of this Falcon occurring in Cyprus.

Falco subbuteo Linn.

Several of these little Falcons have been obtained in the past few years, but it was not until 1913 that it was ascertained that they nested locally. On the 25th of July of that year a villager found a clutch of four eggs in a deserted Hooded Crow's nest in the Larnaca District. Mr. Horsbrugh, to whom the eggs were brought, describes them as less brilliantly coloured than typical Kestrel's. He shot a hen-bird on the 30th of June, 1913, and found an egg nearly developed in the oviduct.

Egretta alba (Linn.). (*Ardea alba*.)

I noticed a single Great White Heron on the 19th and again on the 20th of April last near Apostol Andrea Monastery, when on my way to and on my return from the Klides Islands. Mr. E. H. D. Nicolls, our Director of Public Works, informs me that he saw a pair in the Limassol District during the spring. These birds are evidently very rare visitors, while the Little Egret can be seen, generally in pairs, every spring.

Platalea leucorodia Linn.

For the past three years in the spring I have seen Spoon-bills at the freshwater lake. On the 12th of December,

1912, I obtained a male specimen shot at Kouklia reservoir out of a small flock.

A pair frequented the freshwater lake last summer until the 2nd of August, when the lake dried up. I do not think that they nested there, as the birds were always to be seen together, and there was no suitable nesting-site for them.

Marmaronetta angustirostris (Ménétr.).

On the 24th of May last I was shown the nest of a Marbled Duck, which had been found by some labourers who had been cutting drains on the edge of the freshwater lake. There were ten fresh eggs. The labourers, who had seen the duck leave the nest, described the bird to me as very light-coloured.

The Rev. F. C. R. Jourdain has identified the down from the nest as that of the Marbled Duck.

Colymbus nigricollis (Brehm). (*Podiceps nigricollis*.)

For several years we have felt certain that the Eared Grebe nested in the Kouklia reservoir, as numbers were to be seen there all the year round.

On the 1st of June, 1913, I found a colony of these birds nesting in this reservoir. There were no less than eighteen nests close together. I recorded this in the October issue of this Journal in that year.

Last summer, at the same place, I found twelve nests with eggs in them and other nests ready for eggs.

It is now established that the three species of Grebes which are found in Cyprus have become resident.

Mr. Bucknill has previously recorded in this Journal that the Great Crested and Eared Grebes were only observed after the Kouklia reservoir was constructed. The Little Grebe was the only member of this family noticed in the island previously.

Glareola pratincola (Linn.).

On the 14th of June, 1913, Mr. B. J. Amirayan and I found five nests containing eggs of the Pratincole at the freshwater lake. There is no record of their having nested in Cyprus before.

Charadrius geoffroyi Wagl.

This Sand-Plover was frequenting the freshwater lake in small flocks during June 1913, when I obtained two specimens. Last summer I saw them from the middle of June up to the end of July at the same place, and I shot several specimens. The last specimen was obtained on the 17th of July, and Mr. M. J. Nicoll, to whom I sent the skin, pronounces it to be that of an immature bird. It differed in plumage from the birds I shot in June, which I took to be non-breeding birds, as their genital organs were not well developed and their plumage non-nuptial.

Charadrius morinellus Linn. (*Eudromias morinellus*.)

In 1909 Mr. Bucknill obtained the only recorded specimen of the Dotterel in Cyprus, but the skin was badly damaged. On the 9th of November, 1912, my cook saw a number of these birds for sale and brought me three, but only one, a female, was fit to skin. This skin, however, was eaten by a cat two days afterwards. I was rather pleased to see that the arsenical soap on the skin disagreed with the cat.

Fortunately another bird was purchased in the bazaar two days afterwards, also a female, and its skin is properly preserved.

Hoplopterus spinosus (Linn.).

Mr. B. J. Amirayan and I found a nest of the Spur-winged Plover with five slightly incubated eggs at the Kouklia reservoir on the 1st of June, 1913. This is the first recorded instance of these eggs being procured in Cyprus, I believe.

Last summer I saw several birds at both the reservoir and the freshwater lake, but I did not find their eggs.

Machetes pugnax (Linn.).

These birds, which usually arrive in large numbers in February and remain until about the middle of May, were to be found unusually late last summer.

I saw a flock of about thirty Reeves on the 21st of June at the freshwater lake, and I shot two of them to be quite sure of their identity. The last date on which I saw them was the 3rd of July. I saw no Ruffs after the 27th of May.

Erolia ferruginea (Brünn.). (*Tringa subarquata*.)

The Curlew-Sandpiper is usually found in Cyprus during the winter, but in 1914 there were flocks of them at the lake during May, and I shot one bird out of a pair on the 6th of June.

Tringa hypoleuca Linn. (*Totanus hypoleucus*.)

The Common Sandpiper remained all last summer with us, as I found them on every occasion that I visited the freshwater lake, and I saw them elsewhere. I feel sure that they nest in the island.

Tringa glareola Linn. (*Totanus glareola*.)

These birds reappeared at the freshwater lake at the end of June. They were in small flocks, and remained until the lake dried up.

Tringa ocropus Linn. (*Totanus ochropus*.)

A few Green Sandpipers remain in the island through the winter, and their numbers are added to in the spring migration until they leave in May.

Last summer a few pairs suddenly reappeared at the freshwater lake in June, and remained there till the water dried up at the end of July.

Tringa totanus (Linn.). (*Totanus calidris*.)

The Redshank is usually met with in winter and early spring, but last summer it appeared again at the lake at the end of June, and I shot one of a pair on the 28th of that month. It was a female with an undeveloped ovary. I saw single birds and small flocks of them until the end of July.

Phalaropus lobatus (Linn.). (*Phalaropus hyperboreus*.)

This unexpected visitor I shot at the freshwater lake on the 21st of June last. I saw no others. It was a male bird with testes largely developed.

Himantopus himantopus (Linn.). (*Himantopus candidus*.)

The Black-winged Stilt now breeds regularly at the Kouklia reservoir and the freshwater lake.

I saw about a dozen nests at the reservoir in one place on the 31st of May last, and two or three weeks later, when suitable nesting-sites appeared above the water in the lake, I saw a number of nests. Most of the nests at the latter place were robbed, and I saw no young birds when I counted later a flock there consisting of over ninety birds.

Hydrochelidon leucoptera (Temm.).

There was a flock of about twenty White-winged Black Terns frequenting the lake from May, until after the 17th of July. Several of these birds were in immature plumage.

Sterna nilotica Gm. (*Sterna anglica*.)

For the past three years I have observed the Gull-billed Tern at the time of the spring migration. The first date was the 24th of May, 1912, when I shot a specimen at Koukليا reservoir. In 1913 I shot one of a pair on the 7th of June at the freshwater lake, and on the 28th of June last I saw a pair at the same place.

Larus gelastes Thienem.

On the 13th of June last I shot one of a pair of Slender-billed Gulls at the lake. A fortnight later I saw a single bird, and on the 9th of July I saw three at the same place. I was hoping that they would nest, but I did not see them again.

There is no record of this Gull having been previously obtained in Cyprus.

Larus marinus Linn.

At the freshwater lake on the 31st of May, 1913, I saw a bird which was undoubtedly a Great Black-backed Gull, and a week later I saw a bird which was probably the same species. It was very wary, and I could not approach near enough to shoot at it with any hope of success.

Houbara undulata macqueenii (Gray & Hardw.).

On the 9th of November, 1912, a male specimen of this Bustard was brought to me. It was alone when shot, near the village of Enkome, some five miles from Famagusta.

Later on another specimen was brought to me mangled almost beyond recognition.

On the 22nd of December of the same year, while driving past Salamis plantation, a Bustard which I took to be of this species got up close to the road.

Mr. W. L. Sclater helped me to identify my specimen.

XII.—*Report on the Birds collected by the late Mr. Boyd Alexander (Rifle Brigade) during his last Expedition to Africa.*—Part III.* *The Birds of Annobon Island.* By DAVID A. BANNERMAN, B.A., M.B.O.U., F.R.G.S.

THE third report on the Alexander collection, which is here issued, is an account of the birds of Annobon, the last island which Boyd Alexander visited before commencing his journey on the mainland. Annobon is much smaller than either St. Thomas or Prince's Island, and has an area of only six and a half square miles. It is, in fact, little more than a volcanic rock rising abruptly from the water. It lies about 60 miles south of St. Thomas and about 100 miles west of Cape Lopez in French Congo and belongs to Spain. Its avifauna is consequently very limited, but, notwithstanding its small extent, it is the home of at least four species or subspecies which are found nowhere else in the world. This is particularly striking, as there are only six resident land-birds on the island.

The four forms restricted to Annobon are :—

1. *Zosterops griseovirescens* Bocage.
2. *Terpsiphone newtoni* Bocage.
3. *Scops capensis* *fee* Salvadori.
4. *Haplopectes hypoleuca* Salvadori.

In this paper I have adhered to the arrangement followed in my account of the Birds of Prince's Island ('Ibis,' 1914, pp. 596-631) and the Birds of St. Thomas ('Ibis,' 1915,

* For Part I, see 'Ibis,' 1914, pp. 596-631 & Part II, 'Ibis,' 1915, pp. 89-121.